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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/707,031	11/17/2003	Qi Zhao	134666-1	1030
41838	7590	11/20/2006	EXAMINER	
GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY (PCPI) C/O FLETCHER YODER P. O. BOX 692289 HOUSTON, TX 77269-2289			KAO, CHIH CHENG G	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2882	

DATE MAILED: 11/20/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/707,031

Applicant(s)

ZHAO ET AL.

Examiner

Chih-Cheng Glen Kao

Art Unit

2882

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 August 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 7-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 7-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 08 December 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. Claims 7-18 are objected to because of the following informalities, which appear to be minor draft errors including grammatical and/or lack of antecedent basis problems.

In the following format (location of objection; suggestion for correction), the following correction(s) may obviate the objection(s): (claim 7, line 6, "said reconstructed image"; inserting - -constrained,- - before "reconstructed"), (claim 8, line 1, "wherein modality"; inserting - -said- - before "modality"), and (claim 11, lines 5-6, "said reconstructed image"; inserting - - constrained,- - before "reconstructed").

Claims 8-10 and 12-18 are objected to by virtue of their dependency. For purposes of examination, the claims have been treated as such. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

2. Claims 7-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

The claims are directed toward a computed implemented method involving computational data. Though the properties are related to physical properties, the data is none-the-less generated within a computer without a physical manifestation. Thus, these claims do not produce a result which meet the standard of being concrete, tangible, and useful.

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The claims must be for a practical application of the abstract idea, law of nature, or natural phenomenon. See *Diehr*, 450 U.S. at 187, 209 USPQ at 8 (“application of a law of nature or mathematical formula to a known structure or process may well be deserving of patent protection”) and *Benson*, 409 U.S. at 71, 175 USPQ at 676 (rejecting formula claim because it “has no substantial practical application”).

To satisfy section 101 requirements, the claim must be for a practical application of the 101 judicial exception, which can be identified in various ways:

- 1) The claimed invention “transforms” an article of physical object to a different state or thing.

- 2) The claimed invention otherwise produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result, based on the factors discussed in MPEP 2106. See also:

http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/dapp/opla/preognotice/guidelines101_20051026.pdf.

The manipulation of data to determine at least one of a correction image and a corrected image (claims 7, 11, and 19), to generate a 3D point cloud of the CT image (claims 9 and 13), or to implement an iterative image reconstruction process (claim 20) is performed by the computer implementing programs and is therefore nonstatutory subject matter. Manipulation of data does not include a physical transformation outside of a computer or representation thereof. A process consisting solely of mathematical operations, i.e., converting one set of numbers into another set of numbers, does not manipulate appropriate subject matter, is not deemed to be tangible, and is therefore non-statutory.

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An example, for claim 7, which would make claim 7 statutory, would be to include a final step of displaying the correction image. Hence, the data would become concrete, tangible, and useful.

With regards to claims 9 and 13, note that the final result of those claims is "to generate a 3D point cloud of the CT image". However, this final result is not useful, concrete, and tangible. Therefore, an additional final step of displaying the 3D point cloud of the CT image may fulfill the requirements of 35 USC 101.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments, see pages 7 and 8, filed August 21, 2006, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 7-20 under 35 USC 103(a) have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made as recited above.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Chih-Cheng Glen Kao whose telephone number is (571) 272-2492. The examiner can normally be reached on M - F (9 am to 5 pm).

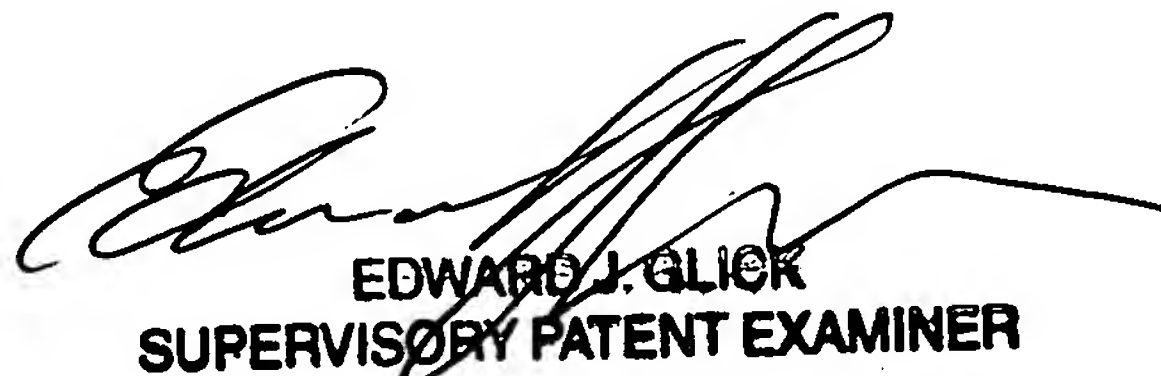
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ed Glick can be reached on (571) 272-2490. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 2882

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



gk



EDWARD J. GLICK
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER